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ABSTRACT

Information and education are crucial for child development. The child's right to information and education protect human values and the human dignity of the child. Formal and non-formal forms of education by parents, friends, schools, and libraries should be based on human rights. The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) provides a framework for human rights education. An analysis of the various types of human rights is presented. These include: general human rights as formulated in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights; human rights of children, with a focus on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; and human rights of children in the home country. Public library services are based on human rights, formulated in the Unesco Public Library Manifesto. These services can play a constructive role in formal and non-formal education about human rights. They respond to the child's right to information in various ways that are explained in this paper. They also support the schools with required materials and programs based on valuable themes, such as human rights. In many countries, professionals that deal with children still have little knowledge about the human rights of children, and they need information and training in this area. Active libraries can help. Some examples of cooperative work for human rights education are given, with recommendations made in the areas of definition of human rights education; training in children's rights; integrated programs and child participation; and voice for children. Web sites for additional information in this area are listed. (AEF)

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The Right of the Child to Information: The Role of Public Libraries in Human Rights Education

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The right of the child to information: the role of public libraries in human rights education

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Introduction
The human right to information, as included in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) refers to the development of the child as a human being as well as a citizen. Societal institutions, such as schools and libraries can contribute to that development, not only by mere information service and knowledge teaching, but most of all by practising human rights: showing respect for the human dignity of children and other human beings in daily life, programmes and policies.

List Key words
Human rights, rights of the child, access to information, public libraries, human rights education

Abstract
This paper starts with the position of the child and focuses on the child's human rights. Information and education are crucial for the child's development. The child's rights to information and education protect human values and the human dignity of the child. Formal and non-formal forms of education by parents, friends, schools and libraries should be based on human rights. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) provides a framework for human rights education.
The next step is an analysis of various types of human rights, which can be included in human rights education. These include: 1) general human rights as formulated in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights; 2) human rights of children, with a focus on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; 3) human rights of children in the home country. Very often the focus is on obvious violations of human rights on the world scene. The closer one comes to one's own situation, the more difficult it seems to be, to adequately respond to larger and smaller injustices, regardless whether they occur in private or public life.
Public library services are based on human rights, formulated in the Unesco Public Library Manifesto. They can play a constructive role in formal and non-formal education of human rights. They respond to the child's right to information in various ways, as will be explained. They also support the schools with required materials and programmes based on valuable themes, such as human rights. Very often public libraries support or perform the services of school libraries. In many countries professionals dealing with children still have little knowledge about human rights of children and need information and training. Active libraries can help. Some examples of co-operative work for human rights education will be given.

The Right to Information as a human right
In the context of this conference, it is useful to take the perspective of children and young people.[1] If we consider the important role of libraries in offering the general public access to information, we must acknowledge that in many countries children form a large part up to half of the users. Therefore their right of access to information is important. Generally speaking about right to access and freedom of expression, these two rights are considered as being interrelated. The right to freedom of expression includes the right to have access to information. One can hardly form an opinion, discuss matters, write an article or make a news programme without sources of information. In fact, expressing one's

[1] This paper is based on: Koren, M., *Tell me! The right of the child to information*, NBLC, The Hague, 1996 (Dissertation University of Amsterdam).

views and opinions may create a new need for information or form a new source of information for another human being.
In the case of children, however, the right of access to information and the right to freedom of expression are not considered as having the same right-bearer, namely children, but are very often opposed to each other; the right to freedom of expression of adults and, because of the nature or effects of some of these expressions, children's limited right of access to information, as they also have the right to protection and should be protected from harmful information.
So, speaking about access and freedom of expression, we have to consider first of all the importance of freedom of expression of children themselves.

1. History of the right to information

The right to information refers to the right of human beings who are seeking for information. Human beings as information seekers have a special meaning for children. A child has an important task: to grow up as a human being, to form a view of him/herself and of the world around. Seeking information therefore can be considered as seeking information for the development as a person and as a citizen. Knowledge about life is eventually the aim of the users' right to information.
Therefore, access to all possible sources which could help to form a view of oneself and of the world one lives in is of utmost importance to every human being. These sources of information may vary from persons like one's parents, friends or educators, to books, media, databases maintained by public libraries or websites created by the government.
The history of the right to information shows the following steps of development. In the former centuries it was the freedom of the press which made the first opening to non-interference from the state in communication processes. In the beginning of the 20th century the focus was on freedom of information, a right especially claimed by the mass media agencies to perform their work and to have the freedom to decide how and about what to communicate without dictatorship or censorship from the state. In fact, this was an increasing powerplay between mass media and government about their roles towards the general public. A further development rose with the internationalisation of journalism in an era of wars or state conflicts in the world. Journalists claimed their right of freedom to gather information, also in other countries and to have the right to impart this information to their home-country and even to other countries. The expansion of especially American media agencies called for a broader freedom. In the sixties the Third World Countries considered the way in which this freedom was used as Western imperialism. It also opened up the possibilities of propaganda, especially useful in the era of the Cold War. Sometimes this was defended by introducing the right to information as the general public's right to know.
A further step is to consider the right to information as the right of citizens to have access to information. Many national and international legal formulations contain such a phrase. Yet, this aspect is only half of the right to information. The other part is the right to educate oneself, an expression found in e.g. the German Constitution. It is this right which really refers to human beings as humans, self-reflective persons, seeking for meaning in life. The right of the child to information can be considered as an exponent of this right.

Many people who are in favour of human rights and support them as a minimum moral standard for the relationship between the state and citizens and human beings among each other, hesitate when it comes to apply them to children. It seems as if children first have to prove that they are human beings, or that they deserve to have human rights. Nobody has to deserve human rights, everyone has them because s/he is born as a human being. The central concept is the respect for human dignity, which is regardless of age, competence, cultural background, the ability to speak for oneself etc. So there can be no doubt about children possessing human rights, and having the right to be respected as human beings. Some people think this is unnecessary: you can lie to children, you can spank them, you can talk about them, even while they are present. Some seem to think they come from another planet and speak to them and about them using a different language. Especially those who are formulating youth policies discuss and describe this special species which has to be directed, kept from the streets, disciplined, educated etc.
Mostly children are underestimated, their thoughts and feelings are not taken into account; their views not seen, their voices not heard. Yet, they do feel, they can think and create their own solutions. Sometimes one can even wonder who is educating who. Why are we so afraid of children, a professor of family law once exclaimed; a question to be answered by oneself. What are we doing by creating a special kind of species called children, and then struggling to find a way to approach them and to communicate with them. And is what we communicate to them the information children are seeking?

The UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948) emphasises as a final basis for all law and justice, the inherent human dignity and the inalienable rights which every human being possesses by nature.

> Article 1
> All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

It took a longer time before people realised that children were included in this Declaration and that they were bearers of human rights themselves. The UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) focussed on the protection of children, establishing their rights in ten principles. In the course of time a stronger legal instrument was considered necessary. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) added a more modern approach, recognising explicitly children as subjects of human rights, competent to exercise their rights, give their views and participate in society. In the European context some of these aspects have been further elaborated in the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights (1996). The idea is to strengthen the right of children especially in family proceedings affecting them. In these procedural rights, the right to information plays an important role. This right has, however, a much broader content than its application in a procedural context.

2. The right of the child to information

In tracing a right to information in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, explicit formulations are found in the child's right to freedom of expression (article 13) and the right of access to information (article 17). The latter refers to the role of the mass media in providing information and material from a variety of sources. Implicit formulations of the right to information provide a wider spectrum. They refer to the role of information in the process of upbringing by parents, the development of the child's personality; the freedom to express views in all matters concerning the child's life; the freedom of thought, conscience and religion; and, the respect for private life. Other implicit formulations are related to the child's right to information which supports social participation, such as the freedom of association; the possibilities of the child to participate in cultural life; access to education; and, the right to know about human rights of children.

The various references in the Convention and the whole tradition of human rights make clear that access to information has especially to be provided in view of the educational potential and the understanding of human values protected in human rights.
According to the Convention, the responsibility for the upbringing and education of the child lies primarily with the parents. The best interest of the child will be their basic concern. Parents have to take into account the evolving capacities of the child. This means, their influence and decisive power should decrease when the child grows older and is more mature. The State has obligations to support and assist parents in their tasks. Not only parents but all who encounter children e.g. teachers, have the obligation to respect children and support them in exercising their rights. As for example, the child has a right to express views in all matters affecting the child, there is a clear obligation for all who are taking decisions, formulating policies or creating the child's environment, either in schools, in the street or elsewhere to organise the participation of children and provide them with access to appropriate information.
Those who have the societal task of providing access to information, therefore have the obligation to provide this for children as well. Almost all states in the world (and even the USA has at least signed the Convention) are parties to the Convention and have accepted its obligations; they are committed to implement the various articles and provisions of the Convention. The role and activities of schools and public libraries can be considered as part of this implementation of the Convention of making the right to have access to information and human rights education effective for the child. Therefore no state, school or public library can maintain that it has nothing to do with the Convention or with children's rights. In fact, nobody can refrain from being concerned with the human rights of children.

In article 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child we find the relationship between right of access to information and education, including human rights education confirmed.

> Article 17
> States Parties recognise the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well being and physical and mental health. To this end, States Parties shall:

(a) Encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child and in accordance with the spirit of article 29;
(b) Encourage international co operation in the production, exchange and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national and international sources;
(c) Encourage the production and dissemination of children's books;
(d) Encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous;
(e) Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well being, bearing in mind the provisions of articles 13 and 18.

Several aspects of article 17 refer to educational aims. The first one is the reference to the qualification that information and material envisaged should be of social and cultural benefit to the child. The second qualification refers to the sources of information, especially those aimed at the social, spiritual, and moral well-being and physical and mental health. A further qualification refers to the process of dissemination of information and material in accordance with the spirit of article 29, which also deals with the aims of education. Another educational qualification is found in the linguistic needs of the child. A negative indication is given by the requirement that information should not be injurious to the child's well-being.
This paragraph focuses on the reference in article 17(a) to article 29 as this gives the strongest indication of the required provisions.

Article 29
1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:
(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
(b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living; the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilisations different from his or her own;
(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
(e) The development of respect for the natural environment.
2. No part of the present article or article 28 shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principles set forth in paragraph 1 of the present article and to the requirements that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

The different elements in the aim of education reveal the catalogue of aspirations in the work within the United Nations with the Universal Declaration as its source. It should be noted that the development of the child's personality is the first aim mentioned. The formulation of development `to their fullest potential' indicates that mainstream development with average results is insufficient. Attention has to be paid to the uniqueness of each child, which should be given all possibilities to develop. This also requires an individual approach, providing an inspiring environment and challenges for that particular child. The fullest potential of every human being in a spiritual sense is living as an authentic, true human being.
The development of respect for human rights and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations is a logical continuation of the first paragraph. No human development is possible without respect for others and acknowledging their dignity as human beings. Such respect has to be fostered by teaching human rights and by human rights education. Some developments in this respect will follow. It should be noted, however, that whatever programme or method of teaching human rights is used, it all boils down to the consciousness of the teacher and her/his awareness of human rights in human relationships and activities.
The explicit inclusion of the development of respect for the child's parents in the aims of education was the result of the discussion on possible duties of the child with regard to his parents and the effort to safeguard parental control. The explicit formulation seems to neglect the incredible loyalty a child demonstrates towards his parents, even when they have misbehaved or put themselves in difficult situations. In general, when parents show respect for their child, there is little chance that a child will

not respond to them in the same way. The reference to respect for the child's cultural identity, language and values is important as it implies that education stimulates the desire to become acquainted with one's cultural tradition. As such the aim is broader than a reference to linguistic needs or the needs of minority children. The second part of the provision shows that the aim of education can only be understood and achieved from a multicultural point of view. Such an approach will only succeed if educators are deeply interested in the riches of each culture and demonstrate the values found in these traditions.
The development of social participation is envisaged in the next paragraph on `preparing the child for a responsible life in a free society'. The formulation reflects the former paradigm in which childhood was only seen as a preparation to adulthood. Nowadays the focus has changed: being a child, living through the period of childhood, has a value in itself. It might even be that in respect of human development, psychologically, this period should be valued more than the period of adulthood, which socially, is valued higher than childhood. The preparation for a responsible life is not aimed at using clichés and prejudices, earning a maximum of money or trying to beat others in bloody competition. Education should, on the contrary, take place in a spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendship among people from different beliefs, backgrounds and nations.

The final aim of education is formulated as development of respect for the natural environment. Although one can only adhere to this intention, it has a bitter flavour as one thinks of the extent to which the natural environment has already been destroyed by adults in their struggles for economic gain. Children are highly vulnerable to the effects of environmental degradation. Their specific interests should be taken fully into account. Now it seems that awareness has increased of the role children and youth can play in sustainable development. This has been elaborated in Agenda 21, the UN Programme on environmental issues, which, with reference to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, urges countries `to establish a process to promote dialogue between the youth community and Government at all levels and to establish mechanisms that permit youth access to information and provide them with the opportunity to present their perspectives on government decisions, including the implementation of Agenda 21.'[2]

Acquiring knowledge about nature and the consequences of human behaviour is one thing, being inspired by alternative or conscious behaviour of adults is another. Some traditions are less man-centred and regard the whole universe as one living cosmic system, in which all living beings deserve respect. Recent research demonstrates: `Environmental education should not just transfer new or clarify existing norms and values, but should be a critical introduction into value-charged knowledge about the environment. Only this way of education can bring children to some kind of personal autonomy and responsibility.'[3]

To the general obligations formulated in the Convention belong the following ones:
- Respect; the child has the right to be respected. The Polish pedagogue and author Janusz Korczak already formulated this and the Convention is a witness of that fundamental acknowledgement. This also includes the principle of non-discrimination: all children must have equal access to information, even if this requires extra measures because they are refugees, disabled, belong to a minority group, live in remote areas or have parents without a job. Paying respect also means to take into account the evolving capacities to the child, thus adapting information and programmes to their understanding, but never underestimating or downgrading children's competence, but challenging them instead.
- The best interests of the child; they should be the primary consideration in all measures concerning children. In schools we can use this formulation as a yardstick for measures concerning programmes, activities, space, rules, democracy etc. In the library we can think of opening hours, the best place for the children's department, preference for a children's librarian, an adequate budget at least for children.
- Maximum resources. Article 4 of the Convention explicitly mentions that States Parties are obliged to implementation to the maximum extent of their available resources, where needed, within the framework of international co-operation. This means that when budget cuts are made, the children's services should be the latest to be affected if at all. Rich countries cannot easily maintain that they have used their maximum resources for giving children access to information and cultural participation. Countries in poorer conditions can require help and support in international co-operation.

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2. A/Conf.151/4 (Part III), Chapter 25 Children and youth in sustainable development, p. 10.
3. Praamsma, J., Het milieuvraagstuk als pedagogisch probleem. Over kennen en waarderen in natuur- en milieu-educatie, in: *Tijdschrift Vraagstelling*, autumn 1994, p. 89.

- Participation. Respect for the views of the child refers to the obligation of the state or public libraries to enable children to participate in the creation of services, programmes and activities. The approach that children only have to be protected and are not competent to views, ideas and decision-making is outdated. The Convention obliges to take a child-perspective and to communicate and co-operate with them. This requires a change of attitude of adults, teachers and librarians, and trust in children themselves. Those who have started with paying more attention and giving a follow up to the views and participation of children have been surprised by their competence, creativity and sense of responsibility.
Apart from these general obligations, there are more specific ones, also applicable in schools and libraries. One of them includes human rights education.

Human Rights Education
Understanding human rights implies various elements of the right to information. The basis is the right to be informed about one's rights. Without knowing about one's rights, even the right to information is useless. Understanding rights, however, points to a further process: not only knowing that rights exists or that one has rights, or knowing their content, but also knowing what the background to human rights is. This background necessarily involves to be or become sensitive to the values that are sought to be protected by human rights. In understanding these values it will become clear what role human rights can play in the human community and how important it is to respect them, in the same way as one expects others to respect them for the protection of oneself. Understanding human rights is an educational process in which one not only learns about one's rights and those of others, but also to develop a view on values protected by them. Discovering values and discussing them, is preferably both a philosophical undertaking and a practical exercise. Learning about human rights and applying them in situations in which children live form the best proof of understanding them. Those situations can also be schools and youth organisations.
This approach makes clear that understanding human rights is much broader than civics education, citizenship education or information on rights, given by, for example children's law shops or a Children's Ombudsman. Such information is necessary too, but focuses more on the juridical aspects of a situation. Human rights have a more normative approach; they are not always legally enforceable, but pinpointing to unjust situations, which need to be changed. Awareness of this broader scope supports further reflection and extended participation by children. It also avoids unnecessary juridification of human relationships, for example within the family or in school.

The Universal Declaration can be regarded as the starting point for education in human rights. It mentions the teaching and education to promote and strengthen the respect for human rights and requires that every individual and every organ keeps this Declaration constantly in mind. A lot has been undertaken, especially by Unesco to spread knowledge about human rights and to promote respect of them. Gradually a change is made from the traditional teaching-lessons approach to the necessity of a lifelong process and acknowledging the role information plays in ensuring human rights. The most recent projects point to actual implementation of human rights, for example in schools. This is different from the traditional approach to teach human rights to children, which mainly turned out in telling moving stories about people or children in poor circumstances, in countries far away.

The new challenge is to experience that human rights are nearby and form a yardstick also for one's own country and situations in which one finds oneself. In general, in human rights a distinction is made between education aimed at learning to know and protect one's own rights and learning to know and protect the rights of others. Applied to the situation of children, the latter education points to the need of respect for others in general, and especially to be aware of the situation of children in developing countries or in countries where there is war, conflict or disaster. This subject is often combined with global development and peace education. It is the former type of education which has received a new impetus by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as not human rights in general, but rights of children themselves are the subject. It offers the possibility, not only to learn about children's rights, but to actually verify how they apply to one's own situation. It will be clear, though, that this subject not always will be easily approached by teachers. Nevertheless, as many international declarations and conventions have indicated: education in human rights should be part of the pedagogical task of the school and be part of and reflected in the curriculum. The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna 1993, for example, expressly stated that it

> "considers human rights education, training and public information essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities and for fostering

mutual understanding, tolerance and peace. (...) The World Conference calls on all States and institutions to include human rights, humanitarian law, democracy and rule of law as subjects in the curricula of all learning institutions in formal and non formal settings.
Human rights education should include peace, democracy, development and social justice, as set forth in international and regional human rights instruments, in order to achieve common understanding and awareness with a view to strengthening universal commitment to human rights.[4]

On a regional level, the Council of Europe has also taken initiatives to support education on human rights. After its Resolution (78)41 on Teaching of Human Rights, and its Recommendation (83)13 on The role of the secondary school in preparing young people for life, the Council adopted the more elaborated Recommendation on Human Rights Education:

"Throughout their school career, all young people should learn about human rights as part of their preparation for life in a pluralistic democracy.
Schools are communities which can and should be an example of respect for the dignity of the individual and for difference, for tolerance, and for equality of opportunity, (...)
Recommends that the governments of members states, having regard to their national educational systems and to the legislative basis for them, encourage teaching and learning about human rights in schools in line with the suggestions."[5]

The Council of Europe organised a series of educational research meetings. One of them, held in 1989, was devoted to Socialisation of School children and their Education for democratic values and human rights. The conference took place close before the final decision on the Convention on the Rights of the Child took place, nevertheless, no reference was made to it except for the Swedish contribution, although Thelin in his lecture focused on the global approach. He stated that school education had failed to take seriously the global aspects of human rights, ecology and peace and underlined the right to know about world reality without fear. Young people do not feel that school deals thoroughly enough on nuclear war and environmental threats. Most students learn about global issues via the media, particularly television. They receive very fragmented messages. The role of education is to give frameworks which can make sense of these fragments. `There is no reason (or right) for education to disguise reality, although judgement and caution, of course, are highly important, especially in the junior grades. Children and youngsters have the right to know and in fact also to be upset.' Referring to the European Human Rights Institutions he said: `Legislation is one thing, implementation and information something else. It is in the information work that education and schools have a fundamental role to play.'[6]
From the various contributions it became clear that a difference had to be made between education on human rights as a subject and applying them in the school situation. In teacher training, most is oriented towards the international declarations and the interest in national and world affairs. But apart from knowledge teachers should also be taught to identify and combat all forms of discrimination in schools and society and be encouraged to confront and overcome their own prejudices.[7] This brings human rights education to the core of the educational aim and practice. At various occasions the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has recommended education in human rights, both in the curriculum for children and the training of teachers and other professional groups.[8]

The relationship between international agreements on educational aims and the aims of education level of national states seems sometimes be forgotten. For example, in the national discussion in the Netherlands, organised during the years 1993-1995 on the pedagogical task of the school not a single reference to rights of children was made. This is in sheer contrast to, for example, the activities in

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4. A/CONF.157/OC/1/Add/24 June 1993, World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14-25 June 1993.
5. Council of Europe, Recommendation R (85)7 of the Committee of Ministers to members States on teaching and learning about human rights in schools, Strasbourg, 1985.
6. Thelin, B., Socialization and Human Rights Education - The Swedish Case, in: Starkey, H. (ed.), *Socialisation of School Children and their Education for Democratic Values and Human Rights*. Report of the Colloquy of Directors of educational research institutions held in Ericeira (Portugal) on 17-20 October 1989, p. 84, resp. 81.
7. Starkey, H. (ed.), Socialisation of School Children and their Education for Democratic Values and Human Rights. Report of the Colloquy of Directors of educational research institutions held in Ericeira (Portugal) on 17-20 October 1989. p. 219-223.
8. For example at the occasion of concluding observations on Italy and Portugal, CRC/C/46.

Sweden where various school organisations have set up new school plans and used the international agreements, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child as background, fundament and explanation for the various values and aims formulated in the School Programme.[9] A publication clarifies the value of international commitments by a country, and the consequences also for its inhabitants. Likewise it makes the Convention more widely known, and shows that the children's rights have to be integrated in the programmes at school. It is noteworthy that a children's author, Gunnel Linde, introduces the theme of the publication. Children's literature can be very useful in exemplifying situations in which human rights play a role.

In fact, stories about different children from different ages and in different circumstances have been used in a project aimed at working with the Convention within schools. The central question was: Could the Convention contribute to make a change in the way the school is run, with a larger openness in all relationships, and with more security and solidarity among pupils? It was also envisaged to make the Convention known to children, teachers and parents; to give examples for practical implementation of the Convention; and, to combine the project with further training courses for school staff. The project was a co-operation of Rädda Barnen and the Association of Swedish Municipalities. Parts of the project were also used for radio- and television programmes for various groups: pupils of secondary schools, teachers, adults in general, children of nursery schools, and their parents. Results were presented as being only the beginning of working on children's rights in schools, as teachers and children in every school have to find out and decide for themselves how to work and apply the Convention.[10]

Various types of human rights, which can be included in human rights education include: 1) general human rights as formulated in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights; 2) human rights of children, with a focus on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 3) human rights of children in the home country. Very often the focus is on obvious violations of human rights on the world scene. The closer one comes to one's own situation, the more difficult it seems to be, to adequately respond to larger and smaller injustices, regardless whether they occur in private or public life.
Most studies on possible ways of teaching and learning human rights are concerned with human rights in general, as the Convention (CRC) and children's rights are rather recent. Sometimes non-jurists even have difficulties in discerning the Declaration of 1959 from the Convention of 1989, or regard the Universal Declaration as the only source. These misunderstandings and mistakes also continue in the material prepared for human rights education and cause confusion.
Apart from the cognitive and the affective aspects of education in human rights it is important to offer possibilities to action, either specific or in the total activities of the school. It is noteworthy that sometimes discussions on and regulations of pupil councils, rights and duties of pupils and teachers have not been related to human rights,[11] or that `successive Education Acts have shamefully refused to acknowledge children's rights in the area of education.'[12] Many aspects in school life can be related to human rights of children. The right to respect and the right to participation can be considered as the overall rights. In the field of the right to information, one not only can point to the right to education itself, or to the right to have access to the school library, but one can also think of access to one's personal files; or a regulation of which information is given to third parties. Many other rights are excellent for further research and discussion, for example, the right to practice one's own language.

Public Library Services for human rights education, example: The Netherlands
The aim of public libraries is to make information accessible for everyone, and thereby contributing to personal development and social participation of individuals and groups in society. Equality, freedom and universal education are key words. 1200 Netherlands public libraries have declared in their Charter that they want to contribute to the realisation of human rights. In particular this envisages the

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9 Överenskommet! Fyra internationella överenskommelser som ligger till grund för de nya läroplanerna, Skolverket, Stockholm, 1994.

10 Det här är bara början...; Rapport från ett skolprojekt att undervisa om barns rättigheter; att förverkliga barns rättigheter i skolans vardagsarbete; att utveckla skola för barns bästa med FN:s Barnkonvention som redskap, Utbildningsradion, Stockholm, 1992.

11 Schreuder-Vlasblom, M. (ed.), *Onderwijs in mensenrechten*: eindrapport van de conferentie over mensenrechten gehouden te Noordwijkerhout op 24 en 25 maart 1983, Nationale Unesco Commissie Nederland, Den Haag, 1983, p. 40.

12 Freeman, M., Children's rights in a land of rites, in: Franklin, B. (ed.), *The Handbook of Children's Rights*. Comparative Policy and Practice, Routledge, London, 1995, p. 72.

right to information, the freedom of expression, the right to participate in cultural life, the freedom of thought, conscience and belief and the right to privacy. This aspiration is again confirmed in the international Unesco Public Library Manifesto 1994.

How do public libraries realise these aims?
Equal access to information for all is realised by paying extra attention to all who experience difficulties in coming to the library themselves, to those who do not have the habit to read or find it difficult to read in Dutch. The libraries develop extra activities, in which young and old are encouraged to enrich themselves, to expand their understanding, and to develop themselves further, as human beings.
The libraries see to it, that everyone can find something he or she likes. On all kinds of subjects various opinions and approaches are represented: plurality of views, no one-sidedness or biased information.
Information also has to be accessible. Therefore libraries help people to find material, to search the internet, to retrieve documentation. Children are also taught to make a critical use of the various sources of information.
By means of exhibitions, libraries can also draw attention to human rights. Or they may arrange a reading festival or cultural meeting in which one also can experience something of other cultures. The library always invites to make a discovery journey with respect for the other, things or persons, one meets.
Materials to be found in the libraries include

- Posters related to (inter)national human rights days such as: *Freedom is passed on;*
- Newspaper clippings and recent documentation on all kinds of subjects, which are related to human rights;
- Youth Information on all kinds of matters related to young people, among which their rights;
- Address information of Amnesty International, Children's helpline, Children's Law shops, etc.
- Collection of books and other media on matters related to human rights or for specific school projects.
- Reading Programmes, which can include a human rights-related theme as non-discrimination;
- Theme-collections; block collections of materials on a particular subject, for discussion and participatory work in schools, e.g. on various cultures, natural environment, rights.
- Exhibitions of human rights or child organisations or of material presented by children themselves.
- Content for Educational sites; the library network contributes to the Netherlands Knowledge Net by presenting a Library Square full of useful materials. These could include human rights materials if such education is taken up in the curriculum.

Libraries are supported in their activities by NBLC, the association of all public libraries in the Netherlands. In various ways, the NBLC Association support days and events where human rights are on the agenda. This could be 3rd of May, World Press Freedom Day; 4-5 th of May, the memorial of the Second World War and the Liberation Day; 10th of December, the International Day of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
NBLC supports the efforts to draw public attention on the 20th of November, the International Day of the Rights of the Child, to human rights of children. Contacts have been established with childright organisations such as Unicef, Defence for Children International and Children's Law Shops; distribution of information and materials to libraries and library programmes have been set up.
NBLC is partner in the Netherlands Platform of Human Rights Education and has published various teaching materials including Educational Newsletters, Briefing Newsletters for Librarians, Booktips for young readers about children's rights etc.

The 20th of November has been the International Day of Children's Rights ever since the Declaration of 1959 was proclaimed. In 1989 the special character of this day was continued by the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. So the best way of showing commitment to the principles and human rights of children is to celebrate this day in all institutions. What can be done in practice? Before starting programming, listen to the children. Have a talk with them, a panel or an open session. Have them interviewed by peers to ask them about them about their interests, worries and views in general. They may have comments on the library and how they think the library could support them in carrying out plans, having their voice heard in the community or setting up an activity. One could use this as a preparation for an activity plan during the year, with a special focus on the **20 of November as this is the International Day of the Rights of the Child**. The Convention was adopted on this date in 1989. This day should be celebrated by and with children in the library as their place for free thought and development. In co-operation with other organisations in the field of

children's rights and activities the library could set up an exhibition, information market or talk show. Children can be invited to give a talk in school about a child's right, or make a script for a local media station about children's rights.
In the Netherlands, the Dutch Public Library Association NBLC has contacted some child organisations and prepared a newsletter, including, posters, leaflets and postcards for all public libraries to support them in celebrating this day. In 1999, the tenth anniversary of the Convention was celebrated in the libraries through a co-operation between NBLC and UNICEF (and possibly other youth organisations). Librarians received a newsletter and promotional material. The idea was to invite children and the major of the city to speak about children's rights in an open forum in the library. Some children prepared speeches/lectures at school but could extend their activity to the larger community. The public library is considered as an excellent place for showing the importance of children's rights in daily life.

An example of practical human rights education is given by librarians in Haarlem Oost, in the Children's Information Centre or public library. They are very committed to the children and have set up a children's panel and new ways of communication. Children discuss proposals for acquisition, have set up a book quiz for school classes, recruit peers for activities etc. The older ones have set up a computer training course for the younger ones about: how do I make my paper on the computer? When the papers are presented and accepted in school, they are taken up in the library catalogue on loan. Children are proud and committed to their library. This is child participation in the sense the Convention recommended. More and more Dutch librarians are committed to children and their rights.

Recommendations
A variety of recommendations can be made, including the following:
Definition of human rights education
For the further development a clear definition is needed for a better understanding and application of human rights education. Related subjects and approaches can be mentioned such as civics education and citizenship education. These should not be equated with human rights education. Human rights education should be seen as the broader term with the strongest references to human values and human development. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child should form the common framework for curriculum development, programmes and activities.

Training in children's rights
It is important that professionals are involved in the understanding, interpretation and implementation of children's rights in their services. Both the coming and the settled journalists, teachers, librarians should know about human rights of children and the implications in their fields. Therefore, children's rights should be included in the curriculum of teacher colleges, schools of journalism, library schools, polytechnic education, in the same way as this should be the case for policemen, social workers, lawyers etc. In order to raise the consciousness about respect for children, their views and the need for protection of their rights, additional training and workshops should be held, aimed at new attitudes and innovative programmes. The human rights of children and their education are at stake in many professions.

Integrated programmes and child participation
Human rights education and programmes should be based on co-operation of various organisations, if possible establishing a Platform for human rights. Programmes should include the basic value of child participation and introduce respect for the child as common notion of approach. Mutual respect of teachers and librarians will contribute to the set up of integrated activities based on a variety of sources. International networks should promote the exchange of educational materials and programmes and set up a clearing house and research centre.

Voice for children
Through programmes and activities children will experience what human rights actually mean. Their reflections and 'products' should be used as a participating voice in society. Likewise, adults involved in human rights education should take a child's perspective and serve as a children's ombudsman or voice for children, in order to make them more visible in society and create a more liveable or humane society with them.

Websites
Unesco/IFLA Public Library Manifesto(See IFLA policy papers): http://www.faife.dk/

Netherlands Public Libraries: NBLC (English), including: Public Library Charter, Children's Rights in Libraries, Human Rights Education: http://www.nblc.nl/nblcweb/vereniging/english/index.html
Information on Children's Rights: www.crin.ch
Children's House in Cyberspace: http://childhouse.uio.no
Unicef, Information on the Rights of the Child: http://www.unicef.org/crc/
Platform Human Rights Education in the Netherlands: http://www.cmo.nl/platform-mre/index.html
Materials in Dutch about the Rights of the Child: www.cmo.nl/smo/rechten.html
Knowledge Net: www.kennisnet.nl and Library Square: http://ob.kennisnet.nl/